

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2012/13 ALASKA WEATHERVANE SCALLOP GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVELS

Weatherwane scallop fisheries in the Yakutat, Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Dutch Harbor, and Bering Sea Registration areas will open on July 1, 2012. The Cook Inlet Area Kamishak Bay District will open August 15, 2012. Guideline harvest levels (GHL) for the 2012/13 scallop season, and the king and Tanner crab bycatch limits are listed below.

Registration Area	Guideline Harvest Level (Pounds of Shucked Meat)	Crab Bycatch Limits (Number of Crab)	
		Tanner Crab	King Crab
Yakutat			
Area D	120,000	N/A	N/A
District 16	25,000	N/A	N/A
Prince William Sound	<i>Closed for 2012/13 Season</i>		
Cook Inlet	12,500	3,200	30
Kodiak			
Northeast District	60,000	50,874	7
Shelikof District	105,000	79,540	175
Southwest District ¹	25,000	12,000	50
Semidi District ¹	<i>Exploratory Area (by Commissioner's Permit)</i>		
Alaska Peninsula			
Unimak Bight ¹	15,000	12,000	50
Dutch Harbor	5,000	5,000	10
Bering Sea	50,000	65,000 (<i>C. bairdi</i>)	500
		300,000 (<i>C. opilio</i> and hybrids)	

¹ Commissioner's permits required to harvest scallops in the Southwest and Semidi districts and Unimak Bight.

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The commercial weathervane scallop fishery in Exclusive Economic Zone (3-200 nmi) of Alaska is jointly managed by the State of Alaska and the federal government under the Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The FMP was developed by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Most aspects of scallop fishery management in federal waters are delegated to the State of Alaska. However, amendments to the MSA in 2007 mandated all FMP fisheries be managed under annual catch limits (ACL) that account for all sources of mortality to ensure overfishing does not occur. The 2012/13 season scallop GHGs established by ADF&G comply with these federal ACL requirements.

The Yakutat Area GHGs will be 120,000 pounds of shucked meat in Registration Area D and 25,000 pounds of shucked meat in District 16. The Registration Area D GHG of 120,000 pounds of shucked meat is a 40,000 pound reduction from the prior year and is based on continued declines in overall fishery catch per unit of effort (CPUE), bed specific CPUE declines, historic fishery performance, and compressed shell height distribution. The District 16 GHG of 25,000 pounds of shucked meat is unchanged from the prior year. During the 2012/13 weathervane scallop season in the Yakutat Area the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will assess distribution of effort, fishery performance as measured by CPUE, and monitor crab bycatch. Poor fishery performance may result in area or partial area closures prior to achieving the full GHG.

The Prince William Sound Area (PWS) is closed to scallop fishing during the 2012/13 season due to low abundance. Scallops in PWS are assessed biennially and scallop estimates declined for the third time in as many surveys. For Cook Inlet Area, the 2012/13 scallop guideline harvest level is 12,500 pounds of shucked meat and only Kamishak District waters north of 59° 16.00' N. lat. are open to fishing. The next Cook Inlet survey will occur in 2013.

During the 2012/13 weathervane scallop season in the Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Dutch Harbor, and Bering Sea areas, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will assess fishery performance as measured by catch per unit effort (CPUE) and monitor crab bycatch. Poor fishery performance or excessive crab bycatch may result in area, or partial area closures prior to achieving the full GHG.

The Kodiak Area Northeast District scallop GHG will be 60,000 pounds of shucked meat. To prevent overharvest of localized scallop beds, harvest will be apportioned across smaller management units throughout the district. Harvest will be capped at 20,000 pounds of shucked meat in statistical area 525630. Harvest in the remainder of the Northeast District south of the latitude of Cape Izhut (58° 06.00' N lat.) will be capped at 35,000 pounds of shucked meat. Harvest north of the latitude of Cape Izhut will be limited to 5,000 pounds of shucked meat. Statistical area 525702 will be closed for the 2012/13 season.

The Kodiak Area Shelikof District scallop GHG will be 105,000 pounds of shucked scallop meat. Harvest will be capped at 100,000 pounds of shucked meat east of 154° W long. Harvest in the remainder of the Shelikof District west of 154° W long will be capped at 5,000 pounds of shucked meat.

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The Kodiak Area Southwest District will open to exploratory scallop fishing under the provisions of a commissioner's permit (5 AAC 38.076 (e)) with a harvest limit of 25,000 pounds of shucked meat. Participating vessels are encouraged to distribute effort to delineate scallop beds.

In March 2012, the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) modified closed waters for scallops (5 AAC 38.425) in the Alaska Peninsula Area (5 AAC 38.420 (b)) allowing for exploratory scallop harvest in Unimak Bight (west of a line extending south from Cape Pankof at 163° 03.70' W. long. and east of line extending south from Scotch Cap Light at 164° 44.72' W. long.) under the authority of a commissioner's permit. Harvest will be capped at 15,000 pounds of shucked meat for the 2012/13 season. Participating vessels are encouraged to distribute effort to delineate scallop beds.

The Bering Sea side of the Dutch Harbor Area will open with a GHL of 5,000 pounds of shucked meat. The Pacific Ocean side of the Dutch Harbor Area will be closed for the 2012/13 season.

The Bristol Bay-Bering Sea Registration Area will open with a GHL of 50,000 pounds of shucked scallop meat.

For additional information contact ADF&G in Kodiak (907-486-1840), Douglas (907-465-6393), Dutch Harbor (907-581-1239), Homer (907-235-8191) or Cordova (907-424-3212).

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